



Cracking the Coverage Code Amidst COVID-19



Gregg Castano, Founder and CEO of [News Direct](#)

With the COVID-19 pandemic unleashing an avalanche of news releases and story pitches onto already time and resource strapped journalists, it has become an almost herculean task for PR practitioners to flag their attention, much less earn coverage for their client or employer.

The least effective way to capture and engage journalists is by sending them an antiquated, self-serving press release that lacks relevance, timeliness and immersive multimedia assets.

It's no secret that today's journalists want content with a sensory element to it. It must go beyond the written word to tell stories visually, but with brevity and from a unique perspective, because that's what the consumers of their product demand – and that has never been more relevant than it is right now.

Given that preference, it becomes clear that getting them to spot your story among the multitudes vying for their favor requires following a few simple rules.

- **Understand their predicament.** They're under pressure to consistently produce content that will generate meaningful engagement (e.g., shares, comments, likes, click-throughs), and don't have much time to spare to hunt around for it, especially under the current circumstances. That's an opportunity to get creative, because audiences want to ingest news in digestible tidbits, while also being informed, engaged and entertained. That means short-form video, compelling images and informative infographics.
- **Be relevant.** As difficult as the coronavirus pandemic is to endure, it permeates every aspect of our lives – on our social newsfeeds, televisions, and conversations. So, pitching a story that's disconnected from that theme will not only fall on deaf ears, but also brand you as tone deaf.
- **Consider new methods.** With technology and service offerings changing all the time, it can be beneficial to explore new ways to get in front of those coveted journalistic eyeballs. While you should still use what are now conventional vehicles for storytelling – such as Twitter, Facebook and other social platforms frequented by journalists for story fodder – seek out alternatives that are likely to capture a journalist's attention simply because they're different, thereby offering the possibility of a unique angle.

Of course, the content itself must have value to the discriminating scribe, that's a given. But by using today's digital tools to serve that content up in popular formats, you'll be doing them a great service, which can only increase your odds of getting your story noticed and covered.



About the Author: *[News Direct](#) was founded by Gregg Castano, a veteran of the newswire industry.*

Gregg spent 32 years at Business Wire, capped by nearly 8 years as President, where he was integral in growing the company from under \$20 million in revenue to more than \$160 million. With an insider's understanding of the industry, and expertise in strategic planning and management, Gregg leveraged his unique perspective and insight to create the disruption he believed was long overdue – News Direct.